

ALEXANDER THE GREAT VIII

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It is maintained by some that Sirras, the father of Eurydike who was Philip II's mother, was an Illyrian and not a Lynkestian (Makedon). The *Illyrian thesis* has been recently expanded in this journal by Kate Mortensen who has cited *pro-Illyrians* and *pro-Lynkestians*.¹

The name Sirras, rather than hīrras,² is very rare, and a second instance of the name is known from an inscription from Lete. The history of the Lete inscription may be found in Margarites G. Demitsas, No. 677,³ which has been republished in *BCH* 103 (1979), pp. 283-284, No. 1 = [SEG 29, 1979 (1982), No. 608]. In line 15 of this inscription the second name is Σίρρας,⁴ and its verification is owed to a squeeze made by Charles Edson in 1938, as reported by Miltiades Hatzopoulos in *BÉ* 1988, No. 828.⁵ The Lete inscription preserves the names of Lysandros (son of Amyntas) and Lyson (son of Nausiades apparently) and their twenty-eight ἐταῖροι (taking also into account lost and fragmentary names). This means that Lysandros and Lyson had fourteen ἐταῖροι each, and undoubtedly Sirras (line 15) was Lyson's ἐταῖρος.⁶

M. G. Demitsas has observed that the Lete inscription contains good Makedonian names (above), but its date can only be attributed to the years before 168 B.C., especially if the ἐταῖροι therein make up two (military) decarchies. From the text published in *BCH* 103 (1979) = SEG 29, No. 608 (above), it may be noted that the name Ἀρραβαῖος may be camouflaged in the second name of line 7, while the first name in line 18 should read [Ἀ]δαῖος, an attested Makedonian name. There are also traces of letters in line 1, which may be rendered as [ἀγαθ]ῆ τύχ[η].

But to return to Sirras, the father of Eurydike who figures in three inscriptions from

¹K. Mortensen, *AncW* 22 (1991) 51-57. A. B. Bosworth, *CQ* N.S. 21 (1971) 99 and 100 (pro-Illyrian); E. N. Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus: The Emergence of Macedon* (Princeton 1990) 164 and 191 (pro-Illyrian); R. Malcolm Errington, *A History of Macedonia* (Berkeley 1990) 27 and 29 (pro-Lynkestian); N. G. L. Hammond, *The Macedonian State: Origins, Institutions, and History* (Oxford 1989) 32 (pro-Lynkestian); Charles Edson (pro-Lynkestian) and J. R. Ellis (pro-Lynkestian/pro-Illyrian, so-to-speak) in *Philippos*, ed. by L. D. Loukopoulou and M. B. Hatzopoulos (Athens 1980) 21 and 37 respectively. No attempt is made to list all the "pro-Lynkestians" and "pro-Illyrians".

²Strabo 7 C 326, corrected to Sirras from Hirras; and Plutarch, *Mor.* 14 B-C, corrected to Σίρρα πολυήτις from Ἱεραπολυήτις; see Al. N. Oikonomides, *AncW* 7 (1983) 62-64. The name Sirras, with its other form hīrras, compares to Σελλοί/ Ἑλλοί; cf. also Ὑρρας/ Ὑρρα in *ZPE* 87 (1991) 37.

³*Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum et Latinarum Macedoniae* (1896 = Chicago 1981).

⁴Mortensen (n. 1) 51.

⁵See also Hatzopoulos' other remarks in *ibid.*, under No. 847; *SEG* 28 (1988 [1991]), No. 634.

⁶The name Lyson does bring to mind Lyson of the Lyson and Kallikles tomb.

Vergina (Aigai) and its area.⁷ The double *rho* in his name could be stressed as an indication that it is a Makedonian name, as there was a tendency among the Makedones for reduplication. There is also the name's -ας suffix which would support a Makedonian origin for the name and consequently for Sirras, too. For example, in *IG* I³, No. 89 of 423/2 B.C. apparently, the -ας names constitute about 23% of the Makedones' names there.

As the inscriptions from Vergina and its area have shown (Εὐρυδίκη Σύρρα Εὐκλείαι, Εὐρυδίκη Σύρρα), the father's correct name is Sirras rather than Hirras (above). Aristotle also has preserved the name's correct form in *Politics* V 1311b: κατεχόμενος (sc. Ἀρχέλαος) ὑπὸ πολέμου πρὸς Σύρραν καὶ Ἀρραβαῖον. The names' order seems to imply that Sirras enjoyed greater preeminence; at the same time the order may give validity to Nicholas G. L. Hammond's suggestion that Sirras was regent and Arrhabaios a minor.⁸ On the other hand, it may be that Sirras and Arrhabaios were joint rulers in some other capacity. Since Aristotle's Arrhabaios is undoubtedly the Lynkestian king Arrhabaios I, it is most likely that Arrhabaios I had delegated authority to his son-in-law Sirras, because of his (Arrhabaios I's) age. This may possibly explain why no qualifiers have been appended to Sirras' name by Aristotle and Strabo (and below). In any event, since Sirras is mentioned first, the unavoidable inference is that he had a more active role in the war against Archelaos; that is, Sirras was the στρατηγός and Arrhabaios I the βασιλεύς, instead of Arrhabaios I being both king and general (cf. Hdt. 9.44; Plut., *Alex.* 9.3).

As indicated at the beginning, K. Mortensen and others postulate an Illyrian origin for Sirras, but the beef for such a view is not there. Sirras was without doubt a Lynkestian rather than an Orestian, for example.⁹ Aristotle also reports that Archelaos gave one of his daughters (τὴν προτέραν) to the king of Elimeia (Derdas), because of the war with Sirras and Arrhabaios, in this sequence (above). The marriage shows that Archelaos was bolstering his position against Lynkestis, and perhaps against Orestis, too, as the latter abuts both Elimeia and Lynkestis.¹⁰ However, it would be only speculation to say that Sirras hailed from Orestis. As stated above, he is surely a Lynkestian, even though both Aristotle and Strabo do not explicitly identify him as such, but context does. Moreover, an impression is formed that Sirras was well known in antiquity, or this is possibly due to the obscurity surrounding him, as the son-in-law of Arrha-

⁷Τὸ Ἔργον 1990 (1991) 83; *ΒΕ* 1991, No. 386. For Eurydike, see *BCH* 107 (1983) 792; *SEG* 33 (1983 [1986]), No. 556: Εὐρυδίκη Σύρρα Εὐκλείαι, and *ibid.* 36 (1986 [1989]), No. 651; *ΒΕ* 1987, No. 654; and Hammond (n. 1) 69. In the periodical *Μακεδονικὴ Ζωή*, No. 302 (Ἰούλιος 1991) 10, there is mentioned the Τάφος τῆς Εὐρυδίκης; and Τὸ Ἔργον 1987 (1988) 49. ΕΠΤΑ ΗΜΕΡΕΣ, Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ, 28.III.93, 10 and 11 (Eurydike).

⁸N. G. L. Hammond and G. T. Griffith, *A History of Macedonia*, II (Oxford 1979) 15 and 139 (rulers of *Lyncus*); E. Badian's comment in *Eurydice in Philip II, Alexander the Great, and the Macedonian Heritage*, ed. by W. Lindsay Adams and E. N. Borza (New York 1982) 103.

⁹On Sirras, cf. also Chr. Habicht, *Ancient Macedonia II* (Thessalonike 1977) 512; Hammond (n. 8) 139, n. 2. Perhaps the Sirras in the Lete inscription (above) is from Lynkestis, but this cannot be determined with any accuracy.

¹⁰Arrhabaios, king of Lynkestis, and Antiochos, king of Orestis, are mentioned in *IG*³, No. 89, 11. 10, 56, 57, 58, 67 (Arrhabaios), and 69 (Antiochos); the king of Elimeia, Derdas, in l. 69. The name Arrhabaios, though from a later period, is attested in all three areas (Elimeia, Lynkestis, Orestis); E. Kapetanopoulos, *Epigraphica* 33 (1971) 79-80, n. 11; Habicht (n. 9) 511; D. Samsares, *Makedonika* 22 (1982) 276; and Th. Rizakis and G. Touratsoglou, *Ἐπιγραφές Ἀνω Μακεδονίας* (Athens 1985) 207 (index).

baios I, his involvement in the war against Archelaos, his being the father of Eurydike, Philip II's mother, and the way Eurydike identified herself as Εὐρυδίκη Σίρρα.

Since Sirras is the son-in-law of Arrhabaios I, he must have been younger than his father-in-law. Naturally their ages cannot be conjectured with precision. However, when Arrhabaios I was at odds with Perdikkas II in 423 B.C.,¹¹ he (Arrhabaios) must have been about 30-50 years old. This would place his birth at about 473-453 B.C.¹² His daughter who married Sirras would have been born, then, between 443 B.C. and 423 B.C. [30 year cycle] and his granddaughter Eurydike sometime between 423 B.C. and 403 B.C. [20 year cycle]. By the end of Archelaos' reign in 399 B.C., Arrhabaios I would have been about 54-74 years old. By the same token, Sirras would have been about 34-54 years old, if he were thirty years old, when his daughter Eurydike was born. These chronological approximations can be adjusted-further, since Philip II, Eurydike's son, was born in 382 B. C. and was the younger of three brothers and a sister. Although Eurydike could have had the four children by age twenty/twenty-two, it is best to take age twenty-five as a guide. This would place her birth at about 407 B.C.,¹³ her father's (Sirras') at about 437 B.C., and her grandfather's (Arrhabaios I's) at about 467 B.C. [30 year cycle; see also below]. These approximations identify without difficulty Aristotle's Arrhabaios with Arrhabaios I, the king of Lynkestis and the father-in-law of Sirras. They also appear to explain why Sirras and Arrhabaios I are found together in a war against Archelaos, to wit, this is due to shared power, as also noted above. However, such an eventuality does raise the question whether Arrhabaios I had sons to assist him or even to succeed him. He may not have had any sons, and the family's stemma, as reconstructed after Arrhabaios I, is conjectural.¹⁴ Consequently, the postulation of shared power between Sirras and Arrhabaios I may be valid (above), and the former may have succeeded the latter.

As far as this writer is aware, no one in antiquity "has thrown mud" at Philip II's lineage; not even Demosthenes accused him of not being a full-blooded Makedon. This silence on Philip II's lineage suggests that he was a Makedon from both his parents. Moreover, a second argument may be used to cast out the view that Sirras was an Illyrian. At the marriage of Philip II to Kleopatra, Attalos remarked that now legitimate kings (γνήσιοι, οὐ νόθοι) will be born,¹⁵ as Alexander was half Epirote from his mother's (Olympias') side. The derogatory shot at Alexander would have been also a great insult to Philip II, if his mother's father was an Illyrian.

¹¹Thucy. 4.83.124-128.

¹²Hammond has placed Arrhabaios I's *floruit* at about 445 B.C., (n. 8) 14, but there is no relation between this year and the chronology comments herein. Cf. *SEG* 38 (1988 [1991]), No. 1227, which may parallel Sirras-Arrhabaios.

¹³*Apud* Mortensen (n. 1) 53, N. G. L. Hammond and F. Papazoglou have attributed Eurydike's birth to 410 B.C., but the chronological approximations herein owe nothing to that year (see n. 12 above). Eurydike and Amyntas III had a daughter named Eurynoe, and perhaps the daughter's name is due to Eurydike's mother (name unknown) rather than to Eurydike's name.

¹⁴Cf., for example, the stemmata in Hammond (n. 8) 16, and Habicht (n. 9) 516. Aeropos' father may not have been named Arrhabaios, for in Arrian (1.25) Heromenes appears to have been older than Arrhabaios (sequence of names). There are also Amyntas and Neoptolemos, sons of Arrhabaios (Arrian 1.14.1 and 6, and 20.10). Are they of the Lynkestian royal house? J. R. Ellis, *JHS* 91 (1971) 22-23.

¹⁵Bosworth (n. 1) 102; Plut. *Alex.* 9.4.

At the same time, a shadow would have been cast upon Philip II's legitimacy to occupy the Argead throne. However, there was no such intention in Attalos' remark, and it was only aimed at Alexander. Moreover, if Alexander's paternal grandmother was an Illyrian (or at least half Illyrian from her father's side), Alexander may not have reacted the way he did, though his right to the Argead throne was being questioned. Alexander could have easily answered back that even his father was not a pure Makedon [if Philip II's maternal grandfather, Sirras, was an Illyrian, as maintained by some], but in the scuffle Alexander ridiculed only his father's unsteadiness. Thus, a moral to be drawn from the Attalos incident is that Philip II's mother, Eurydike, was not Illyrian.

There is found, of course, in Plutarch the statement that Eurydike was Illyrian: *Εὐρυδίκην, ἥτις Ἰλλυρίς οὖσα καὶ τριβάρβαρος*.¹⁶ Libanios also identifies Eurydike as Illyrian: *Εὐρυδίκης τῆς Ἰλλυρίδος*¹⁷ as does the Souda under *Κάρανος*: *Εὐρυδίκην Ἰλλυρίδα*. As Ernst Badian has observed, these are late sources, but nevertheless he classified them as "probably good".¹⁸ Justin makes no mention of Eurydike being Illyrian, but he does not record her father's name either (7.4.5).

It may not be possible to trace the process or circumstances by which Eurydike came to be identified as an Illyrian, but it may be due to her place of origin (Lynkestis)¹⁹ and to her father's name Sirras, which has been also transmitted as hIrras (above). In other words, the ethnic Illyrian attached to Eurydike in the above three sources may be an extension of her place of origin and her father's name: ΣΙΡΡΑΣ > ΙΡΡΑΣ > ΙΛΛΥΡΙΣ. Certainly the accusative Ἰλλυρίδα in the Souda implies ΙΡΡΑ > ΙΛΛΥΡΙΔΑ, and probably the same applies to Libanios' ΕΥΡΥΔΙΚΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΙΛΛΥΡΙΔΟΣ > ΕΥΡΥΔΙΚΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΙΡΡΑ. It must be also remembered that the name Σίρρας = Ἰρρας is a very rare one, and misinterpretation may be involved here.²⁰

As the inscriptions from Vergina and its area have shown, as well as the correction in Plutarch's epigram (above),²¹ Eurydike's full name was Εὐρυδίκη(-η) Σίρρα [Εὐρυδίκη Ἰρρα in Plutarch's epigram from Εὐρυδίκη Ἰεραπολιήτις;²² and in Strabo before the correction to Σίρρας from Ἰρρας]. It is very probable that at some point Eurydike's nomenclature was twisted to Εὐρυδίκη Ἰλλυρίς, unless she has been confused with some other Eurydike,²³ or hostility is involved in that ethnic designation. One could be called Ἰλλυρίος in place of βάρβαρος, as can be seen from a *scholion* to Aristophanes' *The Birds*, 1521: ὥσπερ Ἰλλυριοί: Δίδυμος· ὥσπερ βάρβαροι.²⁴ The same process may have worked with reference to Plutarch

¹⁶*Mor.* 14 B-C = Plutarque, *Oeuv. Mor.*: *περὶ παίδων ἀγωγῆς*, text and translation by J. Sirinelli, I (1) (Paris 1987) 63 and 155, n. 3 (under p. 63). Cf. also Hammond (n. 8) 16, n. 1.

¹⁷*Argum. Demosth.* 18 (Teubner 1915).

¹⁸*Eurydice* (n. 8) 103. Could Libanios' and the Souda's Illyris be traceable to Plutarch?

¹⁹Cf. also Ellis (n. 1).

²⁰Is this traceable in the MSS?

²¹Τὸ "Ἐργον 1983 (1984) 30: Εὐρυδίκη Σίρρα; cf. also Strabo 7 C 326; *ΒΕ* 1984, No. 249; and n. 7 above.

²²Oikonomides (n. 2) 64.

²³Cf. D. L. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams* (Cambridge 1981) 498, under CLXXV. Gentius' mother, e.g., was named Eurydike (Livy 44.30.2).

²⁴Perhaps the *Περσίδος* therein has been corrected to *περὶ Λύχνου* <α>.

who also called Eurydike a *τριβάρβαρος*,²⁵ which epithet falls into line with the epigram's mood (above), for it is stated therein that Eurydike learned her ABC's late in life.²⁶ And where did Plutarch find this epigram? Its provenance is without doubt Pieria, as it is a dedication to the Muses. Moreover, this dedication and the one to Eukleia (above) enhance Eurydike's character.²⁷

The Souda records that Leonnatos was related to Eurydike: *σ. Λεοννάτος · στρατηγὸς Μακεδονίας, κατὰ γένος προσήκων <τῇ> Φιλίππου μητρί, συντραφεὶς δὲ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ, κτλ.*²⁸ This suggests that Leonnatos' relation is to be traced to Eurydike's father (Sirras), and not to her maternal grandfather (Arrhabaios I), as the latter is removed by two generations. Moreover, Curtius writes that Perdikkas, Alexander's general, and Leonnatos were of royal descent (10.7.8): ... *Perdiccam et Leonnatum, stirpe regia genitos*. Perdikkas hailed from Orestis, and since his name is coupled with that of Leonnatos, it may be that Leonnatos' family hailed originally from Orestis.²⁹ If this is the sequence of events, Sirras' origin, then, should be sought in Orestis (above), and perhaps Perdikkas should be considered as belonging to Sirras' family, too.³⁰ On the other hand, Leonnatos and Perdikkas may not have been related at all, and the coupling of their names by Curtius is due to the fact that both of them were of royal descent and came from about the same area, Lynkestis-Orestis respectively.

In any case, Leonnatos' relation to Eurydike, which must be traced through her father (above), does strengthen the argument that Sirras was of royal blood, and perhaps his marriage to Arrhabaios I's daughter is to be recognized as an endogamy. This would make Sirras a member of Arrhabaios I's family (a cousin?) and a Lynkestian. At the same time, this line of thought provides a sound explanation to the proposed joint rule of Sirras and Arrhabaios I (above). Furthermore, since Eurydike identified herself quite proudly, it appears, as *Εὐρυδίκη Σίρρα* (above), it can be said that Sirras must have been a Lynkestian (Makedon) rather than an Illyrian chieftain who once invaded Makedon, as lately argued by K. Mortensen (above). The (Argead) Makedones would have been presumably offended, if their queen or *πολιῆτις* sported their former enemy's name in such a fashion. Thus, this and other arguments herein lead to the conclusion that Sirras must have been a Lynkestian. Finally, the marriage of Amyntas III and Eurydike at about 390 B.C.,³¹ before which year Amyntas III had already recovered his kingdom,³² allied the Argead and Bacchiad royal houses. And surely one reason for such a marriage

²⁵Mortensen thinks it goes back to Theopompos, (n. 1) 52; cf. also Hammond (n. 8) 14.

²⁶Hammond (n. 8) 16; Oikonomides (n. 2) 63, n. 4; and Errington (n. 1) 224 (epigram, Eurydike).

²⁷Hammond (n. 1) 32-33; Borza (n. 1) 190-195; cf. also Mortensen (n. 1) 55, n. 85. Again Hammond, *CQ* 41 (1991) 506, n. 34; and *SEG* 38 (1988 [1991]), No. 720. K. Mortensen, "Eurydice: Demonic or Devoted Mother?," *AHB* 6 (1992) 156-171.

²⁸*FGrH* IIB, No. 156, F 178 (Arrian); Hammond (n. 8) 15, n. 4.

²⁹Arrian calls Leonnatos a Pellaaios (8.18.3): ...*Λεοννάτος ὁ Εὐνου...*(Πελλαῖος). Cf. N. G. L. Hammond, *Historia* 40 (1991) 403, n. 24.

³⁰If Perdikkas traced his royal lineage to Sirras, the father of Alexander's paternal grandmother, this may explain in part why Alexander gave his ring to Perdikkas.

³¹By this year Eurydike would have been about seventeen years old (above).

³²Cf. Isocr. *Archidamos* 46, and Diod. 14.92.3-4; Bosworth (n. 1) 100-101, n. 7; Mortensen (n. 1) 53.

alliance would have been the Illyrians³³ who must have been a nuisance to the Lynkestians, too, although the Argeads were not entirely innocent of such a behavior toward Lynkestis.³⁴

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³³Cf. Mortensen (n. 1) 55, for a different interpretation.

³⁴Arrhabaios I's-Perdikkas II's conflict, for example, in Thucydides (n. 11).